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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 001684

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DEPT FOR PRM:PDAS GREENE AND MCE; NEA:DAS DIBBLE AND IPA; L

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TAGS: [IS](#) [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [ISRAELI](#) [SOCIETY](#) [GOI](#) [INTERNAL](#)

SUBJECT: EMBLEM: GOI OFFICIAL REPORTS IFRC READY TO
ANNOUNCE FALL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE TO "PRESSURE THE
SWISS"

REF: A. GENEVA 719

[1](#)B. BERN 423

[1](#)C. STATE 47713

Classified By: Pol/C Norm Olsen for Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

IFRC Might Not Wait for the Swiss

[1](#)1. (C) MFA Deputy Director General for International Organizations Roni Ya'ar told poloff late March 18 that he had just learned during a visit to Geneva and Bern that IFRC will shortly announce its intention to convene an international conference, for late September or early October, to amend the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement statutes to adopt a new emblem. As reported ref (A), the IFRC International Conference would have to follow a Swiss-organized diplomatic conference to authorize a new emblem, and precede the IFRC bi-annual conference in Seoul in early November. Ya'ar's understanding of IFRC intentions differed somewhat from the ref (A) account of movement intentions, in which the chairman of the movement's Standing Commission, Dr. Mohammed al-Hadid, indicated that he wanted to await a Swiss statement of intent to hold the diplomatic conference before he sends out a convening letter for the subsequent international conference. Ya'ar said he understood that the IFRC is ready to announce its intention to convene the international conference as a means to pressure the Swiss into convening the prerequisite diplomatic conference.

[1](#)2. (C) Ya'ar said he received from IFRC (no name given) the following assessments of the positions of key Arab governments and Iran on the emblem issue based on recent IFRC consultations with those governments:

-- Jordan and Algeria: Favorable to resolving the issue of Magen David Adom (MDA) membership in the movement.

-- Iran: Inclined to support steps that advance the movement's humanitarian objectives, but wishes to avoid a proliferation of emblems, given assurances about the non-proliferation of emblems that it said it received when it agreed to give up its own unique emblem.

-- Syria: Not in favor of an outcome that would admit MDA into the movement, but unlikely to stand alone in opposition.

-- Saudi Arabia: Has no substantive objection to resolution of the issue, but does have concerns about timing.

-- Egypt: The Egyptian ambassador in Geneva "is not an ally" on the MDA issue. Ya'ar suggested that the USG and GOI consider going around him in a direct appeal to his superiors in Cairo.

-- Arab League: The Arab League ambassador in Geneva might also be a "problem."

Swiss Special MDA Coordinator Selected

[1](#)3. (C) Ya'ar reported having learned in Bern that Swiss Foreign Minister Calmy-Rey selected a Swiss diplomat serving abroad to serve as GOS coordinator for advancing the MDA issue (ref B). Ya'ar did not know the name of the diplomat, but said he understood that the diplomat had just been informed o/a March 16 about his/her new assignment and arrived in Bern March 18 for consultations. The diplomat is reportedly not a serving ambassador, but Ya'ar said he understands that the Swiss MFA is taking steps to give him/her ambassadorial rank for the MDA assignment, news that Ya'ar qualified as "excellent."

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